Enhancing Academic Integrity through Quality Assurance

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At the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Understand the inherent connection between academic integrity and the quality assurance of academic programs

- Identify the organizations that oversee quality assurance and the degree learning outcomes for Canadian universities

- Understand how academic integrity is embedded in the academic program review process

- Consider ways in which their institutions could enhance academic integrity through their academic program reviews

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The Connection

Quality assurance and academic integrity are intertwined and you cannot have one without the other.

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Two main concerns

Breaches of integrity chip away at the foundation of academia and it puts the credibility of higher education at risk.

1) the potential for students to graduate without having the required degree competencies, and;

2) the possibility that students who engaged in academic misconduct in school might engage in this behaviour in their career.

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Not being qualified ...

From a job readiness perspective, students who have not earned or demonstrated their degree qualifications will not be prepared to contribute to their field; moreover, they can also pose a danger to others (IIEP-UNESCO, 2016; ICAI, 2016).

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Future misdeeds …

Research indicates that students who engaged in academic misconduct may be more inclined to act with misconduct in their careers (Denisova-Schmidt, 2018; IIEP-UNESCO, 2016).

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Integrity is KEY

Maintaining integrity in higher education is *key* to preparing students as social and civically responsible members of society

(Source: <u>International Center for Academic Integrity</u>, 2014, pg. 15).

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

According to an <u>advisory statement</u> released by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2016, "corruption in higher education has a high cost to society" (p. 2), and "...quality assurance systems must take a leading role in this battle" (p. 1).

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UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

"We safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education wherever it is delivered around the world. We check that students get the higher education they are entitled to expect". (Source: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/)

QAA has a "Quality Code" that guides their standards in degree education.

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QAA News

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Latest news

PayPal says no to Essay Mills
Last year, QAA called on influential online platforms to stop doing business with essay writing companies. PayPal has now confirmed plans to remove essay mills from its site.

QAA responds to Education Secretary's Statement on unconditional offers
The Education Secretary Damian Hinds MP has urged universities to review 'unacceptable' admissions practices. Here we give our considered response.

QAA Successfully Confirmed on European Register
QAA's inclusion as part of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) has been confirmed until 2023. In its assessment, the Register Committee concluded that QAA continues to comply substantially' with European Standards and Guidelines.

Visit the QAA newsroom to browse the latest updates and access our news, events, press releases, consultations and circular letters.

QAA Blog

Combatting Essay Mills and Academic Misconduct
Last week saw the launch of the new QAA Blog. Sitting alongside the news pages on our website, the blog gives us a more informal channel to talk about more issues which really matter for our members and other stakeholders.

Our first blog, by QAA's policy lead Gareth Crossman, looks at combatting essay mills and academic misconduct.

QAA has an Academic Integrity Advisory Group that works on large scale AI initiatives

- Scoping the potential for legal sanction against essay mill companies

- Assessing the impact of QAA's guidance on addressing contract cheating and the use of essay mills

- Developing an Academic Integrity Charter

(Source: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity/academic-integrity-advisory-group)

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Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) adopted a VALUES system

"VALUE stands for <u>V</u>alid <u>A</u>ssessment of <u>L</u>earning in <u>U</u>ndergraduate <u>E</u>ducation. VALUE is a campus-based, faculty developed assessment approach organized and lead by AAC&U as part of its Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative". (Source: https://www.aacu.org/value-faqs)

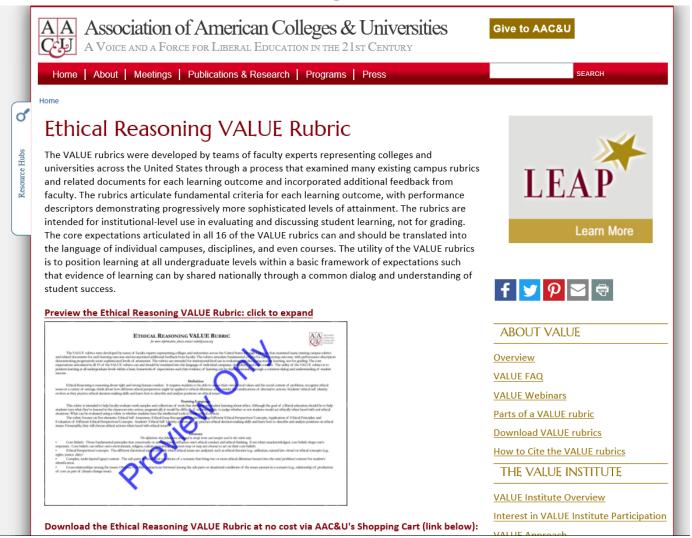AAC&U developed rubrics on 16 specific VALUE learning outcomes across three dimensions.
(Source: https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics)

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Intellectual and Practical Skills	Personal & Social Responsibility	Integrative and Applied Learning
Inquiry and analysis	Civic engagement—local and global	Integrative learning
Critical thinking	Intercultural knowledge and competence	
Creative thinking	Ethical reasoning	
Written communication	Foundations and skills for lifelong learning	
Oral communication	Global learning	
Reading		
Quantitative literacy		
Information literacy	(Source: https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics)	
Teamwork		
Problem solving		

US Ethical Reasoning Standard

(Source: https://www.aacu.org/ethical-reasoning-value-rubric)

Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework

Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada was created in 2007.

These standards were created and adopted by all the Ministers across Canada that were responsible for post-secondary education.

The ministerial statement contains many references to integrity and specifically, academic integrity.

(Source: <u>Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada</u>, 2007).

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Academic QA & Degree Standards in Canada

There isn't one governing body in Canada to oversee academic QA. The Universities Canada website describes how Canadian universities maintain quality assurance.

Despite the fact that each university across Canada has autonomy, they must still subscribe to a national level of general standards

"This means that Canadian universities have a shared understanding of the value of one another's academic credentials and that our high quality standards are recognized internationally".

(Source: https://www.univcan.ca/universities/quality-assurance/)

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Provincial QA Agencies

Each Province has a body that oversees quality assurance and the degree level standards.

Province	Agency Responsible
Alberta	Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education & Campus Alberta Quality Council
British Columbia	Ministry of Advanced Education & Degree Quality Assessment Board
Manitoba	Ministry of Advanced Education
Ontario	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities & Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance
Quebec	Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research & Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire
Saskatchewan	Ministry of Advanced Education & Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board

Where does AI fit?

Academic integrity is embedded in our national degree standards under the section of Professional Capacity/ Autonomy (Council of Ministers of Education, 2007).

"Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement, and other activities requiring (i) the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts, (ii) working effectively with others, and (iii) behaviour consistent with academic integrity."

(Source: Council of Ministers of Education, 2007, p. 7).

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Ontario example

There are 6 Undergraduate Degree Learning Expectations (UDLES)

Depth and breadth of knowledge
Knowledge of methodologies
Application of knowledge
Communication skills
Awareness of limits of knowledge
Autonomy and professional capacity

(Source: Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance)

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| Autonomy and professional capacity | Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring:
a) the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making;
b) working effectively with others;
c) the ability to identify and address their own learning needs in changing circumstances and to select an appropriate program of further study; and
d) behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility. | Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring:
a) the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts;
b) working effectively with others;
c) decision-making in complex contexts;
d) ability to manage their own learning in changing circumstances, both within and outside the discipline and to select an appropriate program of further study; and
e) behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility. |
| (Source: Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance) | | |

Beyond UDLE #6 ...

Ontario universities have some freedom over what is included in their academic program review "self-study" template.

Here lies the opportunity to expand on specific areas of interest such as equity, diversity, and academic integrity etc.

This is done by adding questions that programs must answer such as "what does your program currently do to enhance academic integrity" or "what initiatives does your program plan to adopt in order to increase academic integrity"?

By adding these sections it means that these same questions must be addressed and monitored for improvement in every subsequent academic program review cycle.

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How to enhance AI through QA

Enhancing attention on academic integrity in academic program reviews at universities would help solidify students, instructors, staff and administration's understanding of AI, AND its place as the foundation for academia and maintaining the quality of our degrees.

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Questions?

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